

**Remarks**

The Office Action mailed July 14, 2004 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-6, 8-12 and 14-20 are now pending in this application, of which claims 1, 12 and 16 have been amended. Claim 20 is newly added. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims define allowable subject matter.

The rejection of Claims 1-5, 8-10 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Korsunsky (U.S. Patent No. 5,120,232) is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 now includes the limitations of former dependent claim 7, now cancelled, which was indicated as reciting allowable subject matter in the Office Action. Claim 1 is therefore submitted to be patentable over Korsunsky.

Claims 2-5 and 8-10 depend from independent claim 1, and when the recitations of claims 2-5 and 8-10 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 1, claims 2-5 and 8-10 are likewise submitted to be patentable over Korsunsky.

With respect to claim 19, Applicants note the claim 19 is a dependent claim from independent claim 16, which was not rejected under Section 102 as being anticipated by Korsunsky. Rather, independent claim 16 was actually rejected under Section 103 elsewhere in the Office Action, and claim 16 is submitted to be patentable for the reasons set forth below. Thus, the rejection of independent claim 16 under Section 103 and the rejection of dependent claim 19 under Section 102 appears to be inconsistent and in error. Applicants accordingly requests that the rejection of claim 19 be withdrawn, and in the alternative requests clarification of the basis for the rejection of claim 19 and another opportunity to respond to any rejection of claim 19 which is maintained by the Office.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of claims 1-5, 8-10 and 19 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 1 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Wu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,074,225) is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 now includes the limitations of former dependent claim 7, now cancelled, which was indicated as reciting allowable subject matter in the Office Action. Claim 1 is therefore submitted to be patentable over Wu et al.

Claim 6 depends from independent claim 1, and when the recitations of claim 6 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 1, claim 6 is likewise submitted to be patentable over Wu et al.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of claims 1 and 6 be withdrawn.

The rejection of Claims 12, 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Yatsu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,195,899) is respectfully traversed.

Claim 12 now includes the limitations of former dependent claim 13, now cancelled, which was indicated as reciting allowable subject matter in the Office Action. Claim 12 is therefore submitted to be patentable over Yatsu et al.

Claims 14 and 15 depend from independent claim 12, and when the recitations of claims 14 and 15 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 12, claims 14 and 15 are likewise submitted to be patentable over Yatsu et al.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of claims 12, 14 and 15 be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 16-18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Yatsu et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,195,899) in view of Korsunsky is respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 16 recites an electrical connector comprising “a plug and a receptacle configured for mating engagement with one another,” “a ground plane substantially centered within each of said plug and receptacle, said ground planes of said plug and said receptacle comprising hermaphroditic surfaces mechanically and electrically engaging one another when said plug and said receptacle are mated,” and “each of said ground planes mechanically and electrically connected to a respective conductive shell surrounding said plug and said receptacle, thereby providing a common conductive path to a hardware ground.

Yatsu et al. do not disclose a common conductive path to a hardware ground for the conductive shells of the plug connector (30) and a jack connector (35). It appears that the conductive shells (34) and (49) of the plug connector and jack connector of Yatsu et al. are connected to different conductive paths on different circuit boards, and not to a hardware ground via a common conductive path. Further, the provision of a common conductive path to a hardware ground as recited in claim 16, together with the other recitations of claim 16, is not suggested by Yatsu et al.

Likewise, Korsunsky does not disclose conductive shells at all for the first connector housing (16) and the second connector housing (18). Thus, Korsunsky does not describe a common conductive path to a hardware ground for conductive shells of a connector. Further, the provision of a common conductive path to a hardware ground as recited in claim 16, together with the other recitations of claim 16, is not suggested by Korsunsky.

Claim 16 is therefore submitted to be patentable over Yatsu et al. in view of Korsunsky.

Claims 17 and 18 depend from claim 16, and when the recitations of claims 17 and 18 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 16, claims 17 and 18 are likewise submitted to be patentable over Yatsu et al. in view of Korsunsky.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 103 rejection of claims 16-18 be withdrawn.

The objection to claims 7, 11, and 13 as being dependent upon rejected base claims is respectfully traversed. Claims 7 and 13 are cancelled. Claim 11 depends from claim 1 which is submitted to be patentable for the reasons set forth above. Applicants accordingly request that the objection to claims 7, 11, and 13 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



Bruce T. Atkins  
Registration No. 43,476  
ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP  
One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600  
St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740  
(314) 621-5070